F
158
.68
W75
D2

UC-NRLF
B 3 599 617

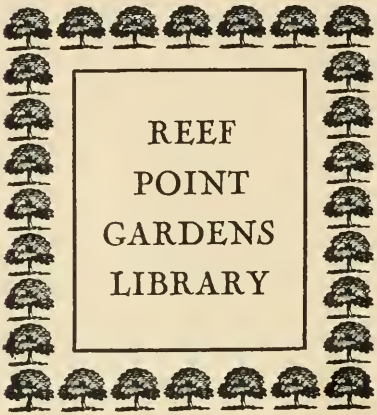
THE WISSAHICKON

COMPILED · BY · T · A · DALY

PVBLISHED BY
THE · GARDEN · CLVB · OF · PHILADELPHIA
1922

BERKELEY
LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

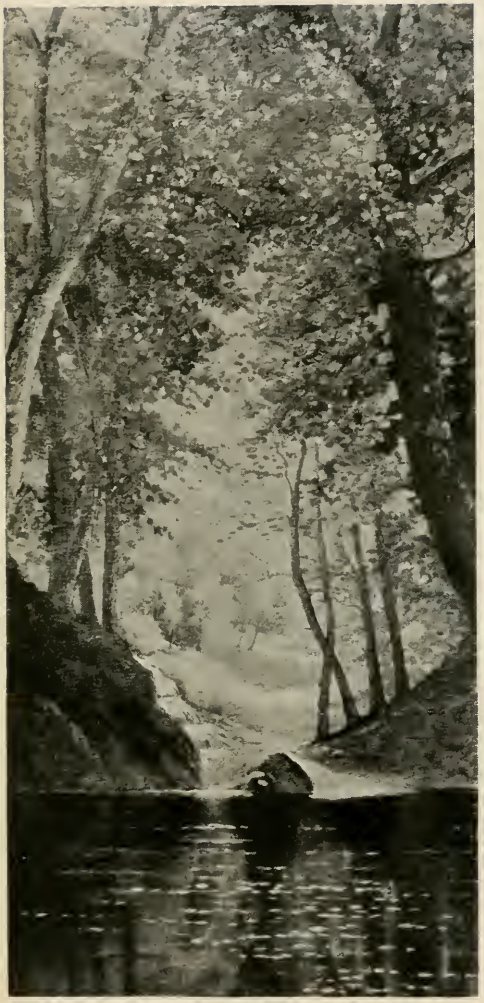
The Gift of Beatrix Farrand
to the General Library
University of California, Berkeley



THE GIFT OF

Mary Newbold Hale
(Mrs. Richard Walden Hale)

THE WISSAHICKON



Devil's Pool

(Painted in 1886 by Henry A. Frey)

COPYRIGHTED

Rocky Path

PHOTOGRAPH
BY KIRBELL BAYES

The Wissahickon

COMPILED BY
T. A. DALY

DRAWINGS BY
HERBERT PULLINGER

PUBLISHED BY
THE GARDEN CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA
1922

Copyright, 1922, by
The Garden Club of Philadelphia

PRINTED BY
George H Buchanan Co.
PHILADELPHIA

LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

F158
.68
W75D2
LANDSCAPE
ARCH.
LIBRARY

TO THE MEMORY

OF

MRS. C. STUART PATTERSON

FIRST PRESIDENT

OF

THE GARDEN CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

822

Contents

	PAGE
Historical Sketch	9
Roads and Walks	45
Outlines of Geology	63
Trees and Wild Flowers	66
Mosses	72
Birds	76
Railroad and Trolley Routes	81

FOREWORD

The vision of William Penn made possible the peaceful settlement of Pennsylvania and permitted the first settlers to plant their gardens where they would. In all other parts of this continent the early colonists had to restrict their gardening to the confines of the towns. Within Penn's Province only was there freedom from Indian hostility.

Here in peace in the Valley of the Wissahickon, in 1694, John Kelpius and his fellow Pietists planned and planted the first botanical garden in this country. The love of these Pietists for horticulture has been the inspiration for gardening which has come down through each generation.

There has also come to this generation a grave responsibility—the preservation of the natural beauties of our land. They are menaced as never before. They must be protected now, if the generations of the future are to have the refreshment and delight that nature alone can give.

The Garden Club of Philadelphia has had this book compiled to encourage the love and enjoyment of nature and to strengthen and develop the appreciation of this wonderful woodland within our own city, so that many more may have the privilege of knowing the Valley of the Wissahickon and that its charms may then be cherished and conserved.

Today in the midst of the stir and strife of city life is needed more than ever the calm and quiet of this Sanctuary of Peace.

THE GARDEN CLUB

Philadelphia, November, 1922.

Acknowledgments

The compiler is indebted, for much of the data in his historical sketch, to the following publications:

"Fairmount Park and the Centennial Exhibition," by Charles S. Keyser, published 1875.

"The Wissahickon in History, Song and Story," by Joseph D. Bicknell, published 1908 by the City History Society of Philadelphia.

"Germantown Gardens and Gardeners" (paper read before the Site and Relic Society of Germantown), by Edwin C. Jellett, published 1914.

"Pennsylvania Archives."

The Garden Club and the compiler desire to express their grateful appreciation

To Elizabeth Shippen Green Elliott, who has most generously given the decoration for the cover;

To Kirbell Bayes, who contributed the frontispiece, "Rocky Path";

To John J. MacFarlane, who gave valuable information;

To Professor Frederick Ehrenfeld, of the University of Pennsylvania, Alexander MacElwee, President of the Philadelphia Botanical Club, George B. Kaiser and William Henry Trotter, for special articles.

The Wissahickon

There earliest stirred the feet of spring,
There summer dreamed on drowsy wing,
And autumn's glories longest cling
Along the Wissahickon.

—T. A. Daly, *in "McAroni Ballads"*

The wise founder of Philadelphia builded better than he knew. When William Penn, in 1682, laid out his "greene country towne" on the Delaware River he may have had a vision of the greatness the centuries would bring to it. But he could scarcely have imagined his city grown to a metropolis, crowded with homes and houses of commerce, yet wearing as a jewel forever fixed in its crown a replica of the wildest natural grandeur to be found in all his "wooded land of Penn." It is no mere fanciful exaggeration to say that this is what has happened.

The Wissahickon region has been called by Baedeker, who is surely an authority upon such matters, "a miniature Alpine gorge." This descriptive phrase could scarcely be improved upon; and, it must be admitted, it was because of the utter impossibility of improving, for practical uses, the region itself that it was permitted by the earliest white settlers to remain an uncut jewel and become to the descendants of those pioneers the treasure it is today.

The gorge of the Wissahickon, except for the building of the necessary avenues of approach, retains much of the virginal beauty its craggy

wooded slopes and mossy, rock-studded waterways wore when the Lenni-Lenape Indians were its only human inhabitants. It is a narrow ribbon of miniature mountain grandeur, of irregular width, six and a half miles long, and having an area of 1250 acres—or about one-third the total area of Fairmount Park. It is a possession unique within city limits in the world.

Wissahickon Creek rises in two springs near Montgomeryville, in Montgomery County, but all its surpassing loveliness lies between the point where it crosses the Philadelphia County line at Chestnut Hill and its junction with the Schuylkill River just above the Falls. It is this part, also, which is richest in historical and romantic interest. Here were the favorite hunting and fishing grounds of the Indians before, and for nearly a hundred years after, the settlement by Penn and Pastorius of Philadelphia and Germantown. Hither came Kelpius and his strange associates, mystics and hermits. Here in the wilderness, at intervals, infant industries were established, including the first paper mill in America. Along the lower reaches of the stream and across the enclosing ridges was fought an important part of the Battle of Germantown, and here were centered the many activities of the patriot "Green Boys" against the British and Hessians. Here in more peaceful times poets and prose writers came to sing and weave their legendary tales; and here, later, came lovers old and young to fashion, or renew, their own romances.

The chief object of this chronicle is to attract the attention of lovers of nature, and, by offering the

fullest possible information of the present visible charms of the Wissahickon region, to lead them to discover for themselves and to enjoy and appreciate the natural loveliness long rock-sealed and unknown to most of the neighboring town-dwellers. To this end maps, pictures, trolley and motor routes, suggestions to hikers and horsemen, and chapters descriptive of the birds, flowers, rock-formation and other physical features of the region are elsewhere presented. That the present charm may be appreciated to the full it is necessary to go back over the past; and it will be best to approach the Wissahickon much as did those first white adventurers who figured in the making of its early history.

Early History

It is likely, although there is no authentic record of the fact, that **The Wissahickon** was first discovered by some inquisitive white man, possibly a Swede from the earlier Delaware settlement, paddling along the eastern shore of the Schuylkill River. In that solitude the sound of the creek's waters tumbling over the natural dam of rocks which then marked its mouth was certain to attract attention. But the rocky formation which prevented navigation of the stream also frowned down from the precipitous banks and discouraged exploration afoot. This barrier to the region beyond continued to exist during nearly a century and a half, for it was not until 1826 that the mass of rock was removed and the way was opened, along

the east side of the creek, for easy access, by foot and wheel, to the heart of the inner valley.

The first white explorers to break into that virgin wilderness were, doubtless, the men who made the survey in 1681-82, arranging the conveyance of the lands along the banks of the creek to twelve patentees, who held them for speculation and later sold portions of their grants to the settlers who followed. These surveyors, very probably went in by the landward route, taking the trail from Shackamaxon on the Delaware which the Indians by long usage had beaten through the laurel bushes and dense underwoods, on their way to and from the Schuylkill and the camps beyond.

It was over this rough trail that **Francis Daniel Pastorius**, the founder of **Germantown**, in the autumn of 1683, led his associates of "the German Company" from the Palatinate, to the tract which, after many weary weeks of delay and discussion, **William Penn** had finally assigned to him. Lands upon a navigable stream had been promised "the German Company," but such desirable tracts were not available, and though the nearest stream, the Wissahickon, was seemingly in no respect serviceable, Pastorius wisely took what he could get. His settlement, spread out in straggling fashion for a mile or so along one main street, prospered and grew; and from among its inhabitants came the first commercial invaders of the upper Wissahickon.

The lower waters of the stream, below the falls, were, apparently, earlier exploited by venturesome spirits from Penn's Colony. Through the activities and the land-holding prominence of one of these

worthies—John Whitpain, devout Friend and ambitious merchant—the locality was in danger for a time of losing its lovely Indian name. In Holme's survey, and in old deeds and grants drawn in 1690, the stream is called "Whitpain's Creek." Fortunately, however, popular favor preserved the Indian name, or rather an anglicized blending of the two words variously used by the Lenapes to indicate its outstanding qualities—"Wisaucksickan" (yellow-colored stream), and "Wisamickan" (catfish creek).

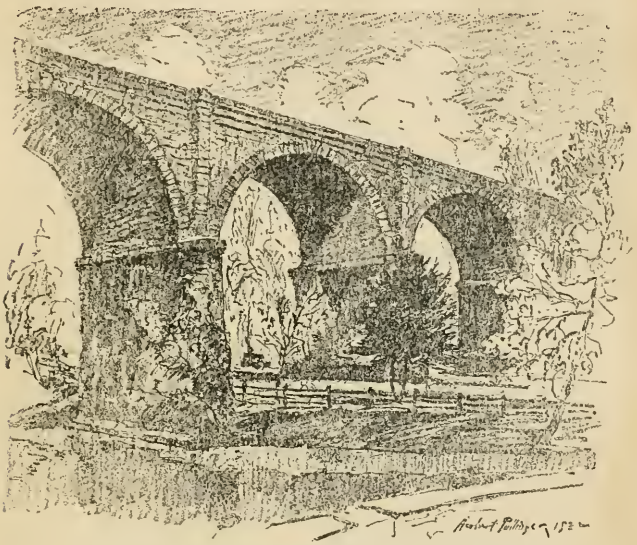
The first industrial plant to harness the power of the tiny torrent was known at different times as "Robeson's Mill" and "Wissahickon Mill." The date of its erection is uncertain, but that it took priority over all others seems probable from the ancient deed recording that in 1686 John Townsend, millwright, and Robert Turner, purchased fifty-three and a half acres, which they sold July 11, 1691, to **Andrew Robeson** together with "the house, saw and grist mill erected thereon." The old deed's failure to mention the exact time, between 1686 and 1691, when the house, saw and grist mill took shape under the builder's hands still leaves a hook for an argument among antiquarians favoring the **Rittenhouse Mill**, erected a mile or more up stream, in 1690—some say 1688.

But there will be more to say of these, and the numerous other mills, later. Any attempt to present, in proper chronological order, the steps in the development of the Wissahickon region must take note of the fact that it was the lower section that first enjoyed direct communication with Penn's

little city down the river. And the river was the most favored medium of travel. "As late as the year 1796," says Edwin C. Jellett, "and for a long time after, Broad Street, Philadelphia, extended only from present South Street to present Vine Street, while above and below these undeveloped thoroughfares were districts of farms unbroken save by fences, unimportant lanes and a few cross roads. At this time northward from the Penn City extended four important arteries. Leading to Frankford, and to points beyond, was Frankford or New York Road. West of this, **Germantown Road** and Old York Road for a distance ran together, parting at Rising Sun Village, the northern branch being the main avenue from Philadelphia to New York, the other, or western branch, passing to and through Germantown and continuing onward to the mountains of the Upper Schuylkill. Following Schuylkill River was Ridge Road, this uniting with Germantown or Reading Pike at Barren Hill, and at Perkiomen Creek." But, as Mr. Jellett mentions later in the same paper, since the Germantown court records show that on March 9, 1702, Justus Falckner and Francis Daniel Pastorius were appointed to confer with Edward Farman, of White Marsh, concerning the cost of a road to Philadelphia, the earlier road to Germantown was evidently a mere trail scarcely worthy to be called a thoroughfare; and the same was very likely true of all roads leading out of Philadelphia at that time.

In 1706 **Ridge Road** was widened and improved, but for many years thereafter the river continued to be the favored link of communication between the

city and the settlements along the Schuylkill. To Robeson's grist mill, a sawmill and a nail factory were added, to meet the needs of the growing farming community west of the Wissahickon. Though Ridge Road can scarcely be said to have hummed



Railroad Bridge, Ridge Avenue Entrance

with industry, it was the busiest avenue of trade thereabouts. Save for the intrusion of William Rittenhouse who erected a grist mill and later a much more famous paper mill about a mile up stream, the solitude of the valley behind the rock barrier at the creek's mouth was unbroken.

To this sylvan stronghold of silence and of complete separation from the outer world came, in 1694,

the Wissahickon's most interesting habitant, a being all spirit, the mystic and Pietist—**John Kelpius.**

Born of a wealthy and distinguished family of Siebenburgen in Germany, John Kelpius studied at the University of Helmstadt under Dr. Fabricius, became proficient in many languages, and early steeped himself in occult science and mysticism. His intense religious fervor and gentle temper drew to him several kindred spirits, all men in easy circumstances like himself, who followed him to the new world where they hoped to devote themselves, undisturbed, to constant meditation and prayer. Kelpius was but 23 years of age when, with his associates, he came to the village of Germantown. For a time they dwelt among the people of Pastorius and converted a few of those earlier settlers to their strange, visionary belief. They soon felt that the worldly bustle of the thriving community was a deterrent to full spiritual development, and taking with them their neophytes, of whom the most famous was Dr. Christopher Witt, they betook themselves deep into the lower Wissahickon woods and built their hermitage at a point about midway between the Rittenhouse Mill and the Ridge Road.

Here they formed themselves into the "Society of the Woman of the Wilderness" and devoted themselves seriously to the important business of preparing for the millennium, which they believed near at hand, and for the coming of "the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and the twelve stars on her forehead; she who had fled into the wilderness." By this Woman, so far

as we may discern her through the mists of mysticism with which they veiled her, was meant the pure spirit of early Christian faith, driven from the world by the wickedness and the dissensions of mankind.

It is the habit of some commentators to sneer at "The Hermits of the Ridge," as they came to be called, as a pack of lazy lunatics. It may be admitted that there were some queer kinks in their otherwise fine minds, but that they were lazy is not at all true. One of the first works to which they set the labor of their hands was the building of a log cabin forty feet square, true to the points of the compass, containing a large assembly room with an iron cross at one end. Four large windows looked out to the west, but the east side was bare; and on this eastward wall was set the mystic sign of the Rosicrucians. For many of them, in common with other learned men of the time, were reputed to be members of that secret order said to have been founded in the 14th Century but of whose actual existence there has never been any proof. So, we are told, the mark of that mystic brotherhood, the cross within a circle, was fixed where it would catch the earliest rays of the morning sun. "On the roof," says Joseph D. Bicknell, in his paper written for the City History Society of Philadelphia in 1906, "was a lantern or observatory, undoubtedly the first erected in America, in which two of the brethren were always on the watch with scientific instruments for the coming of 'the Bridegroom' and incidentally engaged in studying the heavens."

There can be no question of the kindly and beneficent intentions of the brethren. They gave not only spiritual but material aid to all who sought their services. They cast horoscopes and practised and taught magic, divining and healing; and it was mainly for the furtherance of the science of elementary medicine that Kelpius laid out, somewhere along the lower Wissahickon the **first botanical garden in America.** The second was the garden of that beloved disciple of Kelpius, Dr. Christopher Witt, who long survived his young master. But this Witt garden became properly a Germantown, not a Wissahickon, institution; for, wrote Pastorius: "Anno 1711, Christopher Witt removed his flower beds close to my fence." Nearby Dr. Witt laid out his second garden, and it was this "lovesome spot," conducted by the good doctor when "well strickon in years," which was visited and unfavorably criticized in 1743 by **John Bartram,** whose own famous garden established in 1741—the oldest botanical garden still extant in America—lies, in regrettable neglect, along the west bank of the lower Schuylkill opposite Point Breeze.

It was the first garden of Kelpius to which George Webb is supposed to have referred when, in his "Bachelor Hall," published in 1729, he wrote:

> In our vast woods, whatever simples grow,
> Whose virtues none but the Indians know
> Within the confines of this garden brought,
> To rise with added lustre shall be taught,
> Then culled with judgment, each shall yield its juice
> Saliferous balsam to the sick man's use.

Kelpius, doubtless, learned much of native plant values from the Indians, and they in turn were his beneficiaries in many ways. Except for this tradition

Indian Rock

of mutual affection, it is a curious and regrettable fact that in all the historical and legendary records of the Wissahickon there is little mention of the native red men. It may be that they were so mild

as to be commonplace. At any rate, the name of no outstanding chief has come down to us. Nearly a half century after the time of Kelpius, it is true, one **Tedyuscung** did stalk—or stagger—into the story, but he is scarcely worthy of the prominence accorded him. There was nothing of the noble savage about Tedyuscung. "He was," says Charles Keyser, "no true savage—was litigious, was frequently drunk, and showed other evidences of a tendency to lapse into civilization."

For a long time the name of Tedyuscung was associated with **Indian Rock**, the council stone of the Lenapes, one of the grandest of the high spots along the Wissahickon. A rough wooden image, designed to be an effigy of him, was set up there some seventy years ago. Later it was replaced by another and better one, which survived the ravages of the weather and relic-hunters until the beginning of the present century, when it was removed to the rooms of the Site and Relic Society of Germantown. It is to be hoped that time will remove even the memory of Tedyuscung from Indian Rock; for that craggy eminence is now worthily crowned by a memorial in enduring stone, the heroic, crouching figure of a true Lenape, peering, hand to brow, far off to the western wilderness whither the noblest of the Lenapes took their way not very long after the death of Kelpius.

Kelpius, sitting in a chair in his garden and surrounded by his sorrowing disciples, died in 1708, at the age of 35. He had worn himself out by his soul's "long during purification" and the "pensive

longing in the wilderness" (phrases incorporated by him in the title of one of his hymns dated "Anno 1698, January 30"). He was buried somewhere in that sylvan solitude, and with him passed "the consecration and the dream." For though some of his followers stayed on until their own weary bones were laid away among the rocks, others went over to the Mennonite community at Ephrata, and still others returned to the normal workaday life of Germantown.

The Society of the Woman of the Wilderness died with Kelpius, for though a generation later there arose in the neighborhood another short-lived colony of hermits, who occupied the **Monastery** which still stands in the upper reaches of the Wissahickon, these had no kinship with the early Pietists. They were Seventh Day Baptists, led by **Joseph Gorgas**, who had their fasts and vigils and practised a modified mysticism in imitation of their more famous predecessors. For a time proselytes came to them and were inducted into membership through the saving waters of a neighboring pool still known as the **Baptistration.** But these solitudinarians also passed on, after a few years, to the cloisters at Ephrata, in Lancaster County.

Meantime the clatter of mill wheels had been swelling into a lively, if still somewhat scattered chorus through the Wissahickon valley. **William Rittenhouse's** grist mill, mentioned before, had become the **Rittenhouse Paper Mill** in 1690. **William Bradford,** famous American pioneer in the art of printing, was for several years a partner in the

enterprise. In John Holme's "True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania" (1696), we read:

> Here dwelt a printer and I find
> That he can both print books and bind.
> He wants not paper, ink nor skill,
> He's owner of a paper mill.
> The paper mill is here hard by
> And makes good paper frequently.

Richard Frame's quaint excursion in doggerel—"A Short Description of Pennsylvania," printed by William Bradford at Philadelphia in 1696—touches casually upon Germantown

> Where lives High German people and Low Dutch
> Whose trade in weaving linen cloth is much.

and, his limping lines go on to report that

> From linen rags good paper doth derive,
> The first trade keeps the second trade alive,
> A paper mill near German Town doth stand.

This mill was located in a glen behind the Rittenhouse dwelling (still standing and to be preserved, it is hoped, as a venerated, patriotic shrine forever) on the bank of the tumbling streamlet, long known as Paper Mill Run, which enters the Wissahickon at that point. The first mill was destroyed by a freshet in 1700, and William Penn is said to have assisted materially in the erection of a larger plant. Here at this first American paper mill most of the paper used in the middle colonies was made. In 1705 William Rittenhouse became sole owner, and the property and business descended from father to son until the land was bought by the Fairmount Park Commission.

Some distance further up Paper Mill Run **Matthew Holgate** established his fulling mill in 1698, and the industrial invasion of the upper Wissahickon was well under way. At the extreme northern end near City Line William Dewees built, in 1710, the second paper mill in the Colonies, and here, we are told, paper for the cartridges (?) for the Revolutionary Army was made. Nearby was **Daniel Howell's** grist mill, also of 1710. It is unnecessary, and, indeed, it would be impossible—since many records are lost and others are unreliable—to name all the industrial plants that were depending on the water-power of the Wissahickon by the middle of the 18th Century. Most of them were grist mills, and of these the old **Livezey**, or **"Great Mill"** built by Thomas Shoemaker in 1745 was the most important and for a long time the largest in the Colony. Mill dams were scattered all up and down the stream, and over the dam breasts rough roads were laid, affording the only communication, through the wilderness, between Germantown and Roxborough.

But in spite of all this hum of trade fed by its crystal artery the upper Wissahickon has maintained its wild beauty practically inviolate to this day. All these old mills—in 1793 they numbered twenty-four and before the middle of the 19th Century more than sixty—have entirely disappeared, save for a few dismantled foundations. Of the residences of the early factors only the Rittenhouse manse (1707) stands intact, and there is a special reason why this should be. For in the midst of the busy commercialism marking the middle of the 18th

Century a dreamer was born there who was destined to be the most glorious product of that region.

David Rittenhouse, first American astronomer and zealous patriot of the Revolution, was born April 8, 1732. "He followed first the plough," says Charles S. Keyser, in his Centennial History of

Home of David Rittenhouse

Fairmount Park, "but was found so often with the plough lying in the furrow, and the fence full of figures, that he lost that service, and took up the trade of a clockmaker. His first great work, among many others—marvelous in their time, constructed wholly at night, his idle hours as he called them—was the famous orrery now in Princeton University. His next was a series of calculations for the transit

of Venus over the sun's disk. This wonderful mechanical contrivance, the universe in motion on a frame, and these accurate and profound calculations, and their verification by his own observation, gave him a wide-spread reputation in this country and Europe. The life of David Rittenhouse was mainly connected with the world of science, and his fame there rests; but, yet, his mind was also an invaluable machine for the business uses of his generation."

Dreamer among the stars, yet with his feet solidly set upon the land he loved, he was a leader among his patriotic neighbors, served as State Treasurer from 1777 to 1789, afterwards as Director of the Mint, and was for many years President of the American Philosophical Society.

Period of the Revolution

Exact truth and doubtful tradition are so hopelessly mixed in the story of the first hundred years of the Wissahickon region, it is almost impossible now to determine fact from fiction in the records that have come down to us touching the part played by it in the war for American independence.

The deeply wooded, rocky valley, still sealed at its riverward end by granite cliffs, and cut into, from the east or west, only at widely separated intervals by rough mill roads, seems to have been a No-Man's-Land. Somewhere over this difficult ground we know that an important part of the **Battle of Germantown** was waged on October 4, 1777, by the Pennsylvania Militia, under **General John Armstrong**, and the Hessian Jaegers of Knyp-

hausen. But where the bulk of the fighting was done, and by what road, or roads, the patriot troops moved to the attack, it is impossible to say.

The tablet erected in 1907, by the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution, at the entrance to the Upper Wissahickon, below the old Rittenhouse dwelling, says: "On the morning of the Battle of Germantown, October 4, 1777, the Pennsylvania Militia, under General John Armstrong, occupying the high ground on the west side of the creek opposite this point, engaged in a skirmish the left wing of the British forces, in command of Lieut.-General Knyphausen, who occupied the high ground on the east side, along Schoolhouse Lane." This would seem to agree with the tradition that Armstrong advanced over the Holgate's Mill Road, then the most direct route from Roxborough to Germantown—the course he would most likely have taken if his first objective had been an immediate junction with Washington's main army in Germantown. But it was not; as will appear from Armstrong's report of the engagement. At variance, also, with that report is the impression given by the wording of the tablet that the combatants stuck to their respective "high grounds" and fired at each other across the ravine. Even if there had been no dense fog—and there was—this would have been a waste of powder and shot. The muskets of neither Continentals nor Jaegers would have carried that far; and Armstrong's men had at most but two small field pieces.

General Armstrong declares his "destiny" to have been "Vanduring's." The mill of John Vandaren

and Enoch Rittenhouse, built very early in the 18th Century was situated not far from the present Hermit's Lane, which, after much litigation, was opened in 1794, as a private way, giving Michael Rittenhouse (then sole owner of Vandaren's) an outlet from his grist mill to Ridge Road. Also, says Keyser, in his Centennial History of Fairmount Park: "The British line of redoubts extended back of the Wissahickon Creek, along the east side, for a distance of two miles. During the battle the Americans occupied the hills, and until recently (about 1860) the remains of their temporary redoubts were visible, extending along the west side in a semicircle, a considerable distance. In building the Railroad Bridge which crosses here, these old landmarks were destroyed."

The bridge referred to was the wooden predecessor of the splendid stone structure above and parallel with Ridge Road, which—all honor and praise to the good taste of its builders!—serves not only as a viaduct for the tracks of the Reading Railway but as a noble, arched gateway to the Lower Wissahickon. It was in this neighborhood, very probably, that the action of the morning of October 4, 1777, began, and spread later to the point favored by the tablet and beyond. For "the horrenduous hills of the Wissihickon," in which the General in command was obliged to abandon one field-piece, may well have been those lovely, and anything but "horrenduous," fastnesses of the upper reaches.

It is rather curious that although brief extracts from General Armstrong's report have frequently

been quoted, the complete document has seldom, if ever, been published outside of the Pennsylvania Archives. It is a quaint military paper, and it may be that a feeling of squeamish patriotism has prompted most commentators to hide from the plain people its faults of composition. But though many in Colonial times spelled as poorly as General John Armstrong, few could fight as well as he; and there is nothing to be ashamed of in this letter to the President of the Supreme Council of Pennsylvania:

GENERAL ARMSTRONG TO PRES'T WHARTON,

Camp near the Trapp, 5th Octob'r, 1777

Sir:

By a forced march of fourteen miles or upward, on Friday night, General Washington attacked about sunrise yesterday morning, the British & Foreign Troops encamped at Jerman Town, Vandurings & elsewhere toward the York Road. We marched by four different routes—those on the left did not arrive so soon as the Columnes on the Center & Right. The Continental Troops drove the principal part of the Enemy at Jerman Town full two miles; yet what I shall say a victory almost in full embrace was frustrated, but by what means cannot yet be easily ascertained. I think by a number of casualties, a thick fogg whereby not only our ammunition was expended without an object, but it's thought that our own Troops had been taken in an instance or two for reinforcements of the enemy, whereby a panic & retreat ensued, which the General could not prevent! Thus may it be said, thro' some strange fatality (tho' not the less faulty on our part,) that we fled from victory. Another reason was the time spent about Mr. Chew's house, where a number of the Enemy took sanctuary, & from which a number of our people

were killed & wounded. We can yet tell nothing perfectly of our loss, nor of that of the enemy. General Nashes thigh & the head of Major Witherspoon were, it's said, both taken away by one and the same Cannon Ball. I shou'd be glad to send you a Copy of Our Order of Battle, or attack, but have it not here. My destiny was against the various Corps of Jermans encamped at Mr. Vandurings or near the Falls. Their Light Horse discovered our approach a little before sunrise; we cannonaded from the heights on each side the Wissihickon, whilst the Riflemen on opposite sides acted on the lower ground. About nine I was called to joine the General, but left a party with the Colls. Eyers & Dunlap, & one field piece & afterwards reinforced them, which reinforcements, by the way, however did not joine them, untill after a brave resistance they were obliged to retreat, but carried off the field piece, the other I was obliged to leave in the Horrenduous hills of the Wissihickon, but ordered her on a safe rout to join Eyeres if he shou'd retreat, as was done accordingly. We proceeded to the left, and above Jermantown some three miles, directed by a slow crossfire of Canon, untill we fell into the Front of a superior body of the Enemy, with whom we engaged about three quarters of an hour, but their grape shot & ball soon intimidated & obliged us to retreat or rather file off. Untill then I thought we had a Victory, but to my great disappointment, soon found our army were gone an hour or two before, & we the last on the ground. We brought off everything but a wounded man or two—lost not quite 20 men on the whole, & hope we killed at least that number, beside diverting the Hessian Strength from the General in the morning. I have neither time nor light to add but that I am respectfully yours,

John Armstrong

Directed,

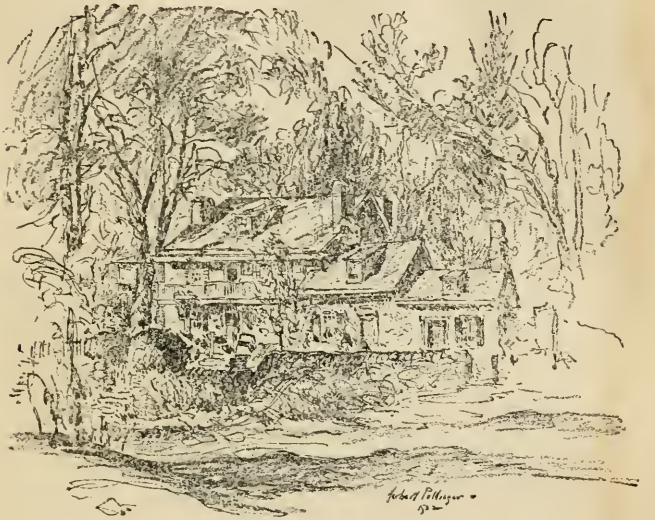
The Honorable Thos. Wharton, Lancaster.

It seems reasonably clear from all this that it was not by Holgate's Mill Road that the Pennsylvania Militia moved into the engagement, but by some road further down, probably the Ridge Road itself.

"Manatawney" was the name most commonly given in Revolutionary times to the present Ridge Road. Before that it had been the "King's Highway." During Howe's occupation of Philadelphia, it was unquestionably the liveliest highway out of Philadelphia, mainly because of the colonists' determination that it should no longer be the King's. British outposts constantly patrolled this avenue of approach, and possible attack, from Valley Forge and other camps along the Schuylkill. Near Rockfish Inn, a short distance below the Falls of Schuylkill, Knyphausen's Hessians had their camp and from that base waged reprisals against the intermittent guerrilla warfare of the "Green Boys," bold young yokels of the neighborhood. An important figure in this patriot band was Jacob Levering, "the spy of the Wissahickon." A surprise attack of the Hessians, directed against Wood's barn, just beyond the mouth of the Wissahickon, in the hope of catching the elusive "Green Boys," tradition has it, led to the massacre of some soldiers of the Virginia Line, who, on their way to Valley Forge had taken shelter there for the night in spite of the neighbors' warnings. (A monument in Leverington Cemetery, Roxborough, commemorates the victims of this massacre.)

In the spring of 1778, Manatawney, or Ridge Road, just above the mouth of the Wissahickon, was the scene of a masterly manoeuvre by General

Lafayette, whom Washington had despatched from Valley Forge, with a force of 2000 men, to make a sortie against Howe in Philadelphia. Howe, advised of this, determined to attack without delay. One force of 5000 men sent around by Chestnut Hill, succeeded in establishing itself a mile in the



Old Livezey Mansion

rear of Lafayette's position, while a smaller detachment, advanced against him up the Ridge Road. These movements were discovered during the night by Captain Allen McLane (or McClane) a vigilant Continental officer, who made his way to Lafayette's camp and apprised him of his danger. The general in command feigned an attack on the larger force, and then by a rapid flank movement took his army safely across the river at Matson's Ford.

The Wissahickon is rich in Revolutionary legends. We are told how **Mom Rinker**, a crafty old woman, was wont to pass valuable messages to Washington's men by concealing them in a ball of yarn which she dropped from **Mom Rinker's Rock** where she sat apparently engaged in innocent knitting; and how, in a skirmish, a dozen Hessians were killed "back of the garden wall in front of the Livezey house" along the Upper Wissahickon. But all these tales may be liberally discounted. It is enough to know that in this wild gorge valiant patriots, in Continental buff and blue, and in rough homespun of the farmhouse—and some even in skirts—gave their best service to the great cause.

But our chief joy now is in the realization that there were then no terrible engines of war to make this "No-Man's-Land" a bleak waste; and that its pristine natural beauty is still ours to enjoy.

The Romantic Discovery

With the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British in June, 1778, and for nearly half a century thereafter, the Wissahickon seems to have reverted to its earlier state of solitude and separation from the world described by Whittier in his narrative poem of "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim":

> Peace brooded over all. No trumpet stung
> The air to madness, and no steeple flung
> Alarums down from bells at midnight rung.
>
> The land slept well. The Indian from his face
> Washed all his war-paint off, and in the place
> Of battle-marches sped the peaceful chase.

The Indian, it is true, was gone, never to return. So, too, were the timid deer, perhaps. But there were other incentives to "the peaceful chase," for, on the testimony of the antiquarian Watson, bears and wolves were shot there as late as 1795. In the pools upstream trout were still to be had, and every spring the broader waters at the mouth of the creek below the falls were alive with a migratory species of catfish which came there (according to a credible witness) "in numbers so numerous as to blacken the narrow passages." The society of **Fort St. Davids,** an ancient and honorable company of amateur anglers and bonvivants, akin to the famous State in Schuylkill, further down the river, had established itself nearby long before the Revolution. **John Dickinson,** frail shadow of a man, but fiery patriot, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, was of this company. When grim war stalked up and down Ridge Road he and his associates were otherwise engaged then in the gentle art of angling. In reprisal for this, Knyphausen's Hessians burned down the "fort." But after the Revolution it was rebuilt and for many years continued to be a lively center of conviviality.

Godfrey Shronk, a noted Wissahickon fisherman, assured Watson, the chronicler, that the small garrison at Fort St. Davids often cooked and dispatched forty dozen catfish at a meal. Shronk himself is credited with having caught 3000 catfish (with a net, of course), in a single night. Shad, also, were taken there as late as 1821, but the Fairmount Dam, erected in that year, thereafter blocked their passage; though the catfish continued still to

tickle the palates of generations of gourmands along the Wissahickon.

The early 20's of the last century marked the beginning of the Romantic Discovery of the Wissahickon. Up until 1822 no effort had been made to open the mouth of the creek, but in that year the

Wissahickon Hall

deep ledge of rock over which the waters tumbled in a graceful fall of ten or twelve feet was removed. Four years later the stone battlements guarding the banks were attacked, and the present road along the east side was cut through to the old Rittenhouse mill. At the same time the road-builders began working through from Chestnut Hill, and that year, 1826, the Wissahickon began to unfold its charms to the public.

Even yet, however, there was no evidence that the public was interested, beyond a casual sharing of the utilitarian thought in the minds of the city's engineers. For it was to afford the mills along the creek a direct outlet to Ridge Road that this improvement was undertaken. In the back of their minds, too, the authorities may have had another practical thought. **Franklin** had recommended in his will (1780) that a portion of the legacy he left to accumulate for the benefit of the City of Philadelphia be expended "at the end of one hundred years, if not done before, in bringing, by pipes, the water of the Wissahickon Creek into the town so as to supply the inhabitants."

Credit for the first discovery of the Wissahickon's sentimental riches belongs to **Fanny Kemble.** This famous actress, and brilliant and beautiful woman, while playing an engagement in Philadelphia in 1832, made several horseback trips to the mouth of the creek, and, though she seems not to have followed its course very far, fell instantly and deeply in love with it. Under date of December 30, 1832, she wrote in her Journal a long and flowery account of her first view of the Wissahickon's loveliness. "The thick, bright, rich-tufted cedars," it concluded, "basking in the warm amber glow, the picturesque mill, the smooth open field, along whose side the river waters, after receiving this child of the mountains into their bosom, wound deep, and bright, and still, the whole radiant with the softest light I ever beheld, formed a most enchanting and serene subject of contemplation."

Later she burst into song about it, and left to posterity at least two poems, both, unfortunately, too long for citation here.

One of Edgar Allen Poe's "Landscapes in Prose," on its first publication was illustrated with an etching of an elk, by J. G. Chapman. This circumstance seems to have been partly responsible for the fact that wherever it has been reprinted it is entitled "The Elk." But the sketch, as it originally appeared in "The Opal," a gift book for 1844, carried the title "Morning on the Wissahiccon." In the course of this article, Poe wrote:

> It was not until Fanny Kemble, in her droll book about the United States, pointed out to Philadelphians the rare loveliness of a stream which lay at their own doors, that this loveliness was more than suspected by a few adventurous pedestrians of the vicinity. But, the "Journal" having opened all eyes, the Wissahiccon, to a certain extent, rolled at once into notoriety. I say "to a certain extent," for, in fact, the true beauty of the stream lies far above the route of the Philadelphian picturesque-hunters, who rarely proceed farther than a mile or two above the mouth of the rivulet—for the very excellent reason that here the carriage-road stops, I would advise the adventurer who would behold its finest points to take the Ridge Road, running westwardly from the city, and, having reached the second lane beyond the sixth milestone, to follow this lane to its termination. He will thus strike the Wissahiccon, at one of its best reaches, and, in a skiff, or by clambering along its banks, he can go up or down the stream, as best suits his fancy, and in either direction will meet his reward.

From this it is clear that the improvement begun in 1826 still left much to be desired eighteen years

later. It was not until 1856 that the present road from Ridge Avenue to the County Line at Chestnut Hill was completed by the Wissahickon Turnpike Company.

At about the time Poe was writing his sketch for "The Opal," a lesser—an infinitely lesser—genius was haunting the Wissahickon and spinning romances much wilder than the hills and glens by which they were inspired. **George Lippard,** born in Chester County, in 1822, but brought to Germantown by his parents while he was still a small boy, was an unwholesome, will-o'-the-wisplike spirit. As boy and man he delighted to wander "where the breeze mourns its anthem through tall pines; where the silver waters send up their voices of joy; where calmness and quiet and intense solitude awe the soul and fill the heart with bright thoughts and golden dreams woven in the luxury of the summer hour."

The Wissahickon runs through several of his sensational novels which had much popularity in their day, tales as feeble, feverish and short-lived as he himself was. On one of the highest rocks of the Wissahickon—probably that known as **"Lover's Leap"**—on a moonlit night in May, 1847, he was married by Indian rites to the frail young woman who preceded him to the grave a few years later.

Besides the prose sketch mentioned before, Poe does not seem to have been moved to write anything in celebration of the Wissahickon's charm. This is regrettable. The silence of **Tom Moore** is more easily pardoned, for though the Irish melodist spent several weeks in a cottage on the west bank

of the Schuylkill only a mile or so downstream, the Wissahickon was not then (1804) so easy to reach. But many years later, one singer approaching the rank of those others—the gentle Quaker poet of Amesbury—did touch lightly and with grace upon this region. In his long eulogy of Francis Daniel Pastorius ("The Pennsylvania Pilgrim") **Whittier** brightens his pages with many splashes of local color, calls back to memory

> * * * painful Kelpius from his hermit den
> By Wissahickon, maddest of good men,

and tells again how

> Deep in the woods, where the small river slid
> Snakelike in shade, the Helmstadt Mystic hid,
> Weird as a wizard over arts forbid.

When Whittier came to the Wissahickon, thus to let his fancy have play among "old, forgotten, far-off things," the lovely valley was on the eve of its restoration—as nearly as could be—to its original state of wild beauty. In that year, 1871, the tunnel was cut through the huge mass of rock on the Schuylkill's east bank above Girard Avenue, and the River Drive was carried through to Mifflin Lane, where it detoured over the old dirt road to Strawberry Mansion and by the Ridge Road to the mouth of the Wissahickon. Over this new and more direct highway, two years later, the **Fairmount Park Commission** may be said to have marched in to take possession of the whole Wissahickon region which it had been authorized to acquire and preserve forever.

The Act of Assembly, approved 1868, provided that,

> It shall be the duty of the said Park Commissioners to appropriate the shores of the Wissahickon Creek on both sides of such width as may embrace the road now passing along the same; and may also protect the purity of the water of said creek, and by passing along the crest of the heights which are now on either side of said creek, may preserve the beauty of its scenery."

It required four or five years to complete the survey and acquire all the property needed, but by 1873 the Commissioners were ready to begin the work of restoration. There was much to be done. In the forty years following Fanny Kemble's trumpeting of its neglected charms, the region had been extensively exploited by Commercial Industry and Social Pleasure—both somewhat unbridled. The numerous mills, already referred to, had so multiplied, and spread not only along the main stream, but also on its several small tributaries, as to make this one of the most important industrial districts within the city limits. All these establishments, with the single exception of the **Megargee Paper Mill** near Chestnut Hill (which was allowed to stand until 1884) were immediately torn down; and so Commerce passed out.

The centers of Social Pleasure were not torn, but merely toned, down. **Taverns and roadhouses,** which had been all that custom in the middle of the Nineteenth Century expected such places to be, either became totally temperate under the new park regulations or disappeared altogether from the neighborhood. At the same time new houses of

entertainment, aiming to profit by the increasing popularity of the Wissahickon, arose at several points outside the park limits but within easy reach

Midwinter

of the main drive, and there for those who cared to seek it, the dance went on, as merry as before.

At most, if not all, of these road houses, before 1873, catfish and waffle and chicken dinners were served at all seasons, and in winter when the roads

were white, and not too deeply covered, trim sleighs drawn by fast steppers flashed up and down the drive from Ridge Road to Chestnut Hill; and moonlight nights especially were all a jangle of silver bells. On fine afternoons from early spring until late fall the sedate carriage-folk of Germantown and Chestnut Hill in their broughams and landaus, the grand ladies shielding their complexions from the sun with tiny parasols and sitting scarcely less erect than their liveried coachmen, took the air and enjoyed the scenery with calm dignity. The fashionable set of the city proper, below Market Street, seldom ventured beyond Sweet Briar or Belmont, which was jaunt enough for an elegant equipage in the 70's.

For these the roadhouse would have hung out its sign in vain. But it did appeal to the horsey set and to the plain people who came in afoot and by horse-car and railway line. The first house of entertainment within the southern gateway was **Wissahickon Hall.** It was built by Harry Lippen, in 1849, at the foot of Gypsy Lane; and there the old house still stands—but as a barracks for the Park Guard. A short distance further along, and on the west bank of the creek was the **Log Cabin,** which first hung out its bush in the early 40's. The catfish and waffles and other refreshments offered at Wissahickon Hall were probably better than the fare the Log Cabin provided, and to catch custom Thomas Llewellyn, the proprietor, introduced as an added attraction a small menagerie of owls, foxes, monkeys and other small animals. Two large,

black bears were chained to an old passenger coach near the inn door.

The **Maple Springs Hotel,** diagonally across the creek from the Log Cabin, built and conducted by Joseph ("Whittler") Smith, also had two bears, and these put the Log Cabin's bruins completely in the shade. They were trained, for the amusement of travelers along the road, to bite the string that held down the cork of a highly-charged mineral water bottle and guzzle the contents. "Whittler" Smith had the knack of carving roots into grotesque shapes, and he maintained besides a collection of curious natural specimens of strange forms in roots and branches.

But all this was 50 years ago. "A plague upon both your houses!" said the Park Commissioners, and the Log Cabin and the Maple Springs Hotel disappeared from the Wissahickon. Of all the inns and roadhouses, once numerous enough along the creek, only one still stands, offering temperate refreshment to travelers—**Valley Green Inn.** Tradition, which is not at all dependable, would make the inn at least 150 years old. For it is said Washington and Lafayette dined there one day on their way from the camp at Barren Hill to Germantown. Another story has it that a large quantity of wine sent from France to Franklin was buried there for safekeeping while the British occupied Philadelphia. But other "authorities" locate this interesting cache at the old **Livezey Homestead** near Allen's Lane.

All this is a mixture of the merest gossip with a thin color of truth. It seems to be true that just

before the Battle of Germantown several casks of wine were sunk in the stream thereabouts. But there was no "large quantity of wine sent from France to Franklin." This story is a simple distortion of the fact that one of the Livezeys did send a small sample of native Wissahickon wine to Franklin when he was at Paris. Franklin praised its

Valley Green

quality but frankly declared it inferior to the French vintages. Washington and Lafayette may indeed have dined more than once at a house in the neighborhood of Valley Green, but the present inn building was not erected until 1850. Abraham Rinker was the first landlord of Valley Green Tavern, and he was succeeded in 1856 by Simon Markley, who gave way later to Abraham Stone. Then came the

Park Commission, bringing a new order of things to Valley Green, but maintaining it still as a delightful rendezvous for all visitors to the upper Wissahickon.

By the time of the Centennial Exposition of 1876 the Fairmount Park Commission had made prodigious improvements in the region entrusted to it only three years before. In every way possible the original wild beauty of the place was restored and the Wissahickon was ready for the admiration of visitors from all over the world. These came, and their amazement and delight and subsequent praise first stirred Philadelphia to a full realization of the value of this unique jewel in its crown, and gave to the region the international fame which had been too long denied.

Under the beneficent administration of the Park Commission the Wissahickon has grown in charm year by year. The history of that half century of restoration and preservation could not be told in words one-half so well as it may be read by everyone who is privileged now to see and enjoy the results of the Commission's labors. Within the limits of this chronicle any adequate description of the loveliness of the Wissahickon—particularly the upper reaches—would be impossible. But brief hints as to special points of interest may be given, and the reader will find in the pages that follow guide-posts that should help him to many a delightful adventure.

Roads and Walks

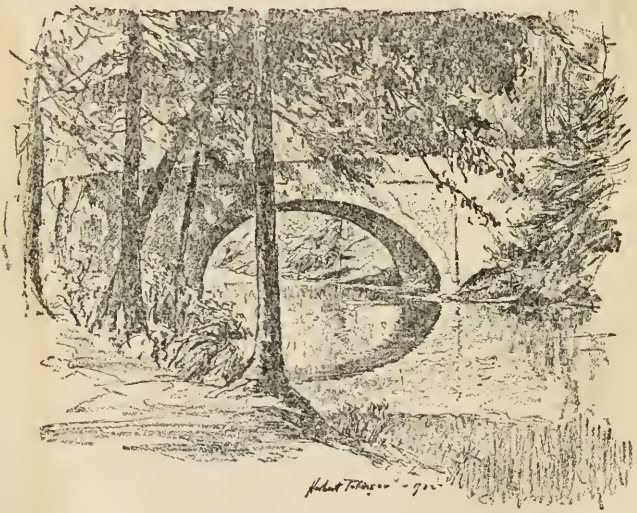
In his delightful "Travels in Philadelphia" (1920), Christopher Morley, poet and essayist, presents several sketches in musical prose, appreciative of the beauties of the Wissahickon region. By way of preface to one of these he says:

> Perhaps Philadelphians do not quite realize how famous the Wissahickon Valley is. When my mother was a small girl in England there stood on her father's reading table a silk lampshade on which were painted little scenes of the world's loveliest beauty glimpses. There were vistas of Swiss mountains, Italian lakes, French cathedrals, Dutch canals, English gardens. And then, among these fabled glories, there was a tiny sketch of a scene that chiefly touched my mother's girlish fancy. She did not ever expect to see it, but often, as the evening lamplight shone through it, her eye would examine its dainty charm. It was called "The Wissahickon Drive, Philadelphia, U. S. A." Many years afterward she saw it for the first time and her heart jumped as hearts do when they are given a chance.

The tiny scene on the lampshade, doubtless one of those which were broadcast over the world from the Centennial Exposition, very probably showed what was then, as now, the noble main entrance, with its broad sweep from Ridge Avenue into the heart of the valley of enchantment. The general view is much the same now as it was then, but the volume of the vehicular traffic through that gateway has greatly increased and its character has wonderfully changed. The brougham and the lan-

dau have gone. In the steady procession of motor-cars along the lower drive any sort of horse-drawn vehicle is as rare as a white blackbird. Yet to see and enjoy the full beauty of the Wissahickon one must either go afoot or ride upon, or behind, a horse.

The automobile, of course, though it has the faults of its virtues, will afford the casual visitor the speediest and most comfortable medium of transportation from the center of the city. And if



Bridge at Valley Green

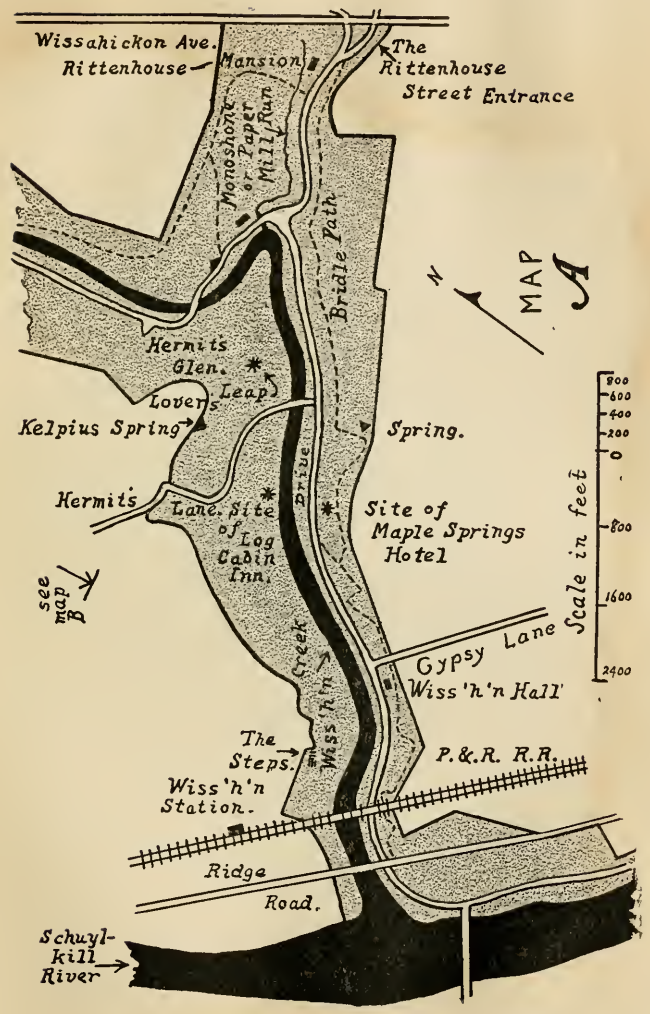
the motorist is willing to brave the honking of impatient horns behind him and will loaf along the far edge of the right of way, there will be beauty enough to reward him, after he turns in from the

A Key Map of the
Wissahickon
Section of
Fairmount Park
Philadelphia
Andorra —
Thorp'sLane —
Thos.MillRoad —
Rex Avenue —
Wise's Mill Road —
Valley Green —
Shawmont Avenue —
Gorgas Lane —
Allen's Lane —
Kitchen's Lane —
Lincoln Drive —
Hermit's Lane —
Ridge Road —
WISSAHICKON
CRESHEIM
SCHUYLKILL
N

East River Drive, until he passes on to the Lincoln Drive, at the old Rittenhouse Mansion. At that point the original Wissahickon Turnpike, following the course of the stream, veers sharply to the westward and, becoming narrower, is closed to motor traffic. But cars may be parked in the neighborhood, or at **Valley Green,** in the heart of the lovely Upper Wissahickon, which automobiles may reach only by way of Springfield Avenue.

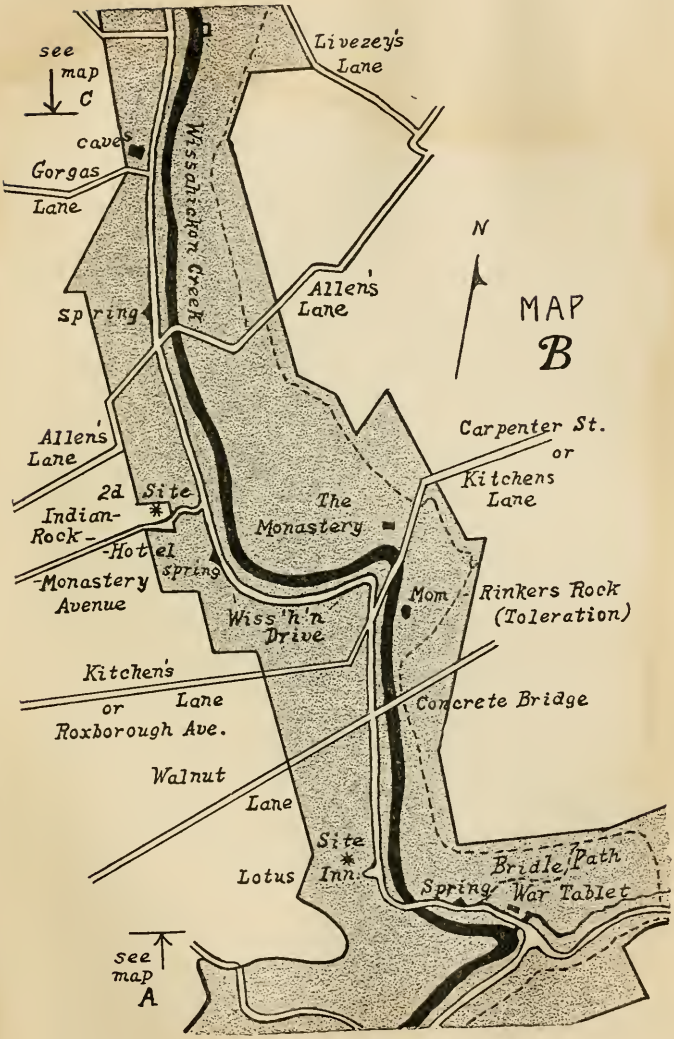
Many of the initiated who come by motor from a distance arrange to have carriages or saddle-horses meet them at **Rittenhouse Street,** which has become of late years a popular rendezvous; for near there the upper drive begins and the **main bridle paths** strike in. The old horse-trail along the heights above the right bank of the creek (going upstream) has its entrance just above the Rittenhouse dwelling; and almost directly across Lincoln Drive, from that point is the entrance to the new trail running south to Ridge Avenue. The maps, A, B and C, will give the general direction and extent of these bridle paths. The reader will understand, of course, that horsemen are free to use the main road; and many, indeed, prefer it. No other parkway within the limits of any city in the world affords such rare and various delights to the equestrian as are to be had here.

But, after all, the best way to see and enjoy a primitive region is the most primitive way. No effort is made in the several simple maps in these pages to indicate the exact location of footpaths. All roads are open to the hiker, and to him alone do all the beauties of the region disclose themselves.


Wissahickon Ave.
Rittenhouse
Mansion
The Rittenhouse Street Entrance
Monoshone or Paper Mill Run
Bridle Path
MAP A
Hermits Glen.
Leap
Lovers
Kelpius Spring
Spring.
Hermits Lane.
Site of Log Cabin Inn.
Site of Maple Springs Hotel
see map B
Drive
Creek
Wiss'h'n
Gypsy Lane
Wiss'h'n Hall
Scale in feet
800
600
400
200
0
800
1600
2400
The Steps.
Wiss'h'n Station.
P.&R. R.R.
Ridge
Road.
Schuyl-kill River

For those who come by railroad or trolley there are several advantageous points of entrance (see page 81), but since Rittenhouse Street serves best as a starting point for excursions afoot in either direction, we will ask the reader to start with us now from that point, for a sweep 'round the circuit. It is not our purpose in these pages to fix hard and fast limits for particular hikes—these, if desired may be obtained of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit, of the Riders' and Drivers' Association, or of the several hiking clubs—but merely to indicate the many points of interest up and down the valley, so that the reader may plan his own rambles.

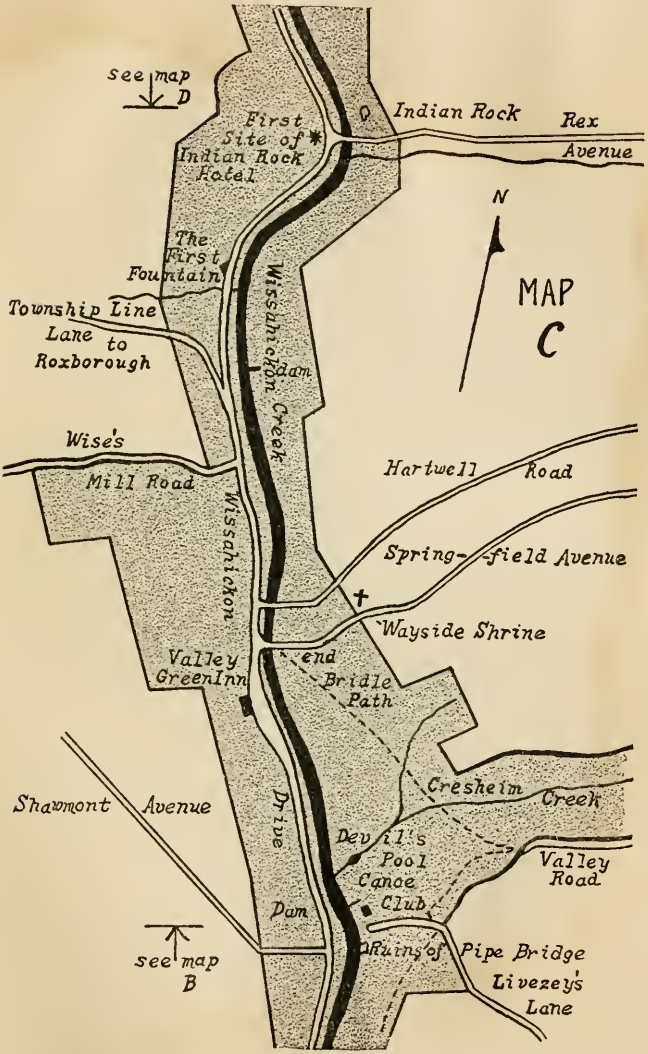
Entering the Park at the junction of Rittenhouse Street and Wissahickon Avenue (see map A) we follow the curve of the road to a point a few yards short of Lincoln Drive, and there turn to the left into the bridle path. Just beyond the old quarry, near the entrance, the trail forks, the path to the right leading across Lincoln Drive to the long horse-trail through the Upper Wissahickon. We bear to the left, over the new bridle path begun and completed within the past two years, and climb to the high ground, skirting the Park's eastern boundary. Far below, to the right, is the entrance to the Upper Wissahickon Drive. The bridle path climbs higher and runs for a considerable distance parallel with the lower Drive. Beautiful vistas open at intervals, as the path dips and lifts along the ridge. Just below **Hermit Lane** the trail sweeps far to the left, leaving the creek behind, and plunges deep into primeval woods. It makes an abrupt turn to the right, a little further on, and crossing **Gypsy**


see map C
Livezey's Lane
caves
Gorgas Lane
Wissahickon Creek
N
MAP B
Allen's Lane
Spring
Allen's Lane
Carpenter St. or Kitchens Lane
2d Site
Indian-Rock-
The Monastery
-Hotel
spring
-Monastery Avenue
Mom Rinkers Rock (Toleration)
Wiss'h'n Drive
Kitchen's or Lane Roxborough Ave.
Concrete Bridge
Walnut Lane
Site
Lotus Inn
Bridle Path
Spring War Tablet
see map A

Lane climbs again to a high cliff overlooking the Drive, and from there winds gracefully down to the lower level, parallels the Drive along a privet hedge for about a hundred yards, and so passes into Ridge Avenue. The distance from Rittenhouse Street to this point is about a mile.

The building on Ridge Avenue just below the entrance to the Wissahickon Drive was long a famous roadhouse. Nearby is the site of **Robeson's Mill,** and at the mouth of the creek, on the bank of the Schuylkill, is the former home of the **Colony of the State in Schuylkill,** now occupied by the Wissahickon Canoe Club. Passing along Ridge Avenue to the west bank of the creek the hiker strikes into a broad path which will lead him back to the upper reaches. A study of the rock formations skirting this path will give a fair idea of the difficulties encountered by the road builders who broke through that granite barrier in 1826. (It would be well here to read Professor Ehrenfeld's graphic article on page 63, or, for fuller information consult Dr. Angelo Heilprin's "Town Geology.")

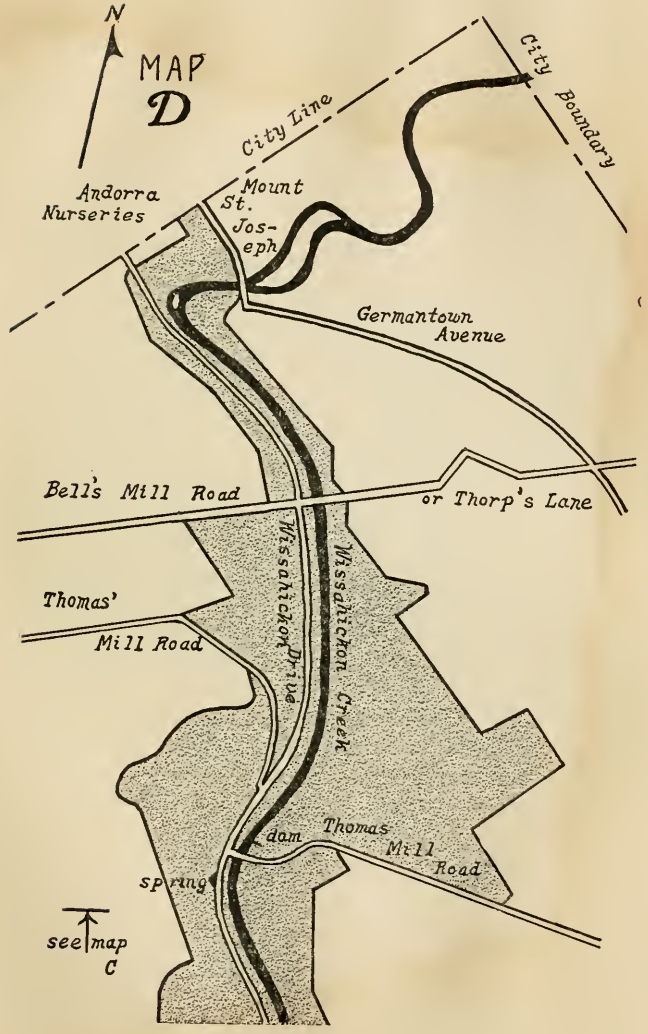
A few hundred feet along this west walk a steep flight of stone steps leads up to Rochelle Avenue, Roxborough. A little further on a fissure in the rock wall invites a scramble to the heights above. Beyond the path enters a broad, level stretch where there is a boat landing and boats for hire. Directly across the creek at this point stands **Wissahickon Hall,** an early roadhouse but now serving as a barracks for the Park Guard. Further on, a quarter of a mile from Ridge Avenue, there is another boat landing and picnic ground. Here stood the old


see map D
First Site of Indian Rock Hotel
Indian Rock
Rex Avenue
N
MAP C
The First Fountain
Township Line
Lane to Roxborough
Wissahickon Creek
Dam
Wise's Mill Road
Wissahickon
Hartwell Road
Spring-field Avenue
Wayside Shrine
Valley Green Inn
end Bridle Path
Shawmont Avenue
Drive
Cresheim Creek
Devil's Pool
Canoe Club
Valley Road
Dam
see map B
Ruins of Pipe Bridge
Livezey's Lane

Log Cabin, and directly across the creek is the site of the **Maple Springs Hotel.** A bridge crossed the creek here, but it was removed in 1919. A short distance beyond is the graceful stone bridge by which Hermit Lane spans the stream, and here the pedestrian must take to the east side or climb the trail over the steep western bank.

The climb upward is preferable, for the reward is great. Directly overhead is **Lover's Leap**, a broad rock jutting out over the wild gorge through which flows the stream two hundred feet below. The peak gets its name from one of those hackneyed traditions of thwarted love with which such dizzy heights are commonly tagged. It deserves a better association. There is evidence that **Kelpius** frequently sat there in meditation, and it is probable that his grave is not far away. The **Hermit's Spring**, said to have been dug by Kelpius himself, was nearby, to the southwest; and the deep gorge, extending northward along the stream from Lover's Leap, is still known as **The Hermit's Glen.** This is one of the most striking natural features in all the Wissahickon region. The hillsides are dotted with huge boulders, and from one of these, a crag jutting out about twenty feet, it is possible to look down, when the trees are bare, upon the creek's sharp elbow where the upper Wissahickon Drive begins.

At this point, which is diagonally across the creek from the Rittenhouse Street entrance, the whole character of the valley seems to change and take on a wilder aspect. From the **Hermit's Glen**, a broad footpath leads gently down the hill slope, and

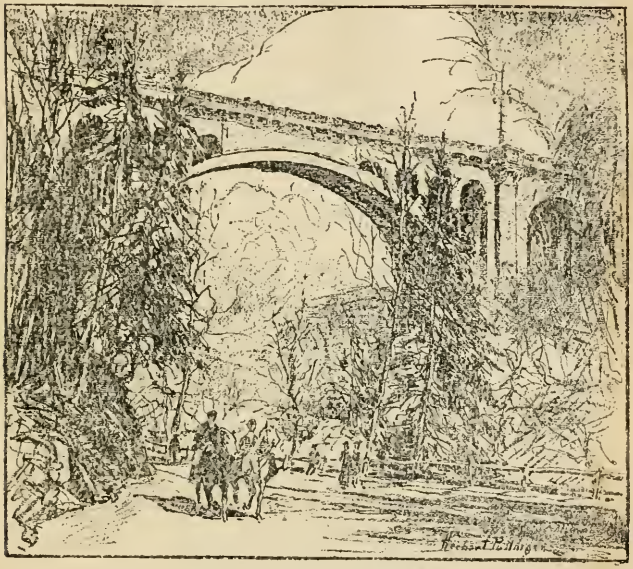

N
MAP
D
City Line
City Boundary
Andorra
Nurseries
Mount
St.
Jos-
eph
Germantown
Avenue
Bell's Mill Road
or Thorp's Lane
Thomas'
Mill Road
Wissahickon Drive
Wissahickon Creek
dam
Thomas
Mill
Road
spring
see map
C

passing upstream, beneath towering trees, strikes into the main Drive where the **Blue Stone Bridge**—noble successor to the old **Red Bridge**—carries the carriage way to the west bank, directly above the broad pool where one may still see remnants of the dam breast of an ancient grist mill. Here, if the scant two miles covered are enough for one day, the bridge to the right may be crossed and the path followed back to Rittenhouse Street. If one's eyes are sharp, the **Indian profile** may be seen in the rock wall a few hundred feet east of the bridge. One should pause, also, to read the **Battle Tablet** on the great rock at the corner, and, passing along **Paper Mill Run** into Lincoln Drive, stop to pay tribute to the birthplace of David Rittenhouse.

The Upper Wissahickon

The upper valley, from the Battle Tablet to the County Line at Chestnut Hill, comprises three-fourths of the total area of the Wissahickon parkway, and decidedly more than that proportion of its rarest charm. Here Nature is at home and the sights and sounds of the bustling modern city are completely shut out. The occasional klop-klop of horses' hoofs and the cawing of crows in the tree-tops are the loudest notes in this sylvan symphony. Beauty crowds so thick upon beauty that no attempt shall be made here to describe them. We can touch only upon the chief points of historical or romantic interest, in a quick trip up the main Drive to the County Line (about six miles) and back by way of the Bridle Path (see maps B, C and D).

Taking the main Drive, then, at the **Blue Stone Bridge,** we pass, on the left, the site of **Lotus Inn,** a small center of large delights up to a few years ago when the land upon which it stood was acquired by the Park Commission and the famous little road-



Walnut Lane Bridge

house was torn down. A few hundred yards further on, the road bends to the left and a good view may be had of **Walnut Lane Bridge,** erected in 1907; at that time, and for some years after, the longest concrete bridge in the world. It is still one of the most beautiful. The lines of its single span, about 125 feet above the stream, and of its five smaller arches, are exceedingly graceful. Just

beyond this high bridge the creek turns sharply to the right, affording a lovely vista from the Drive.

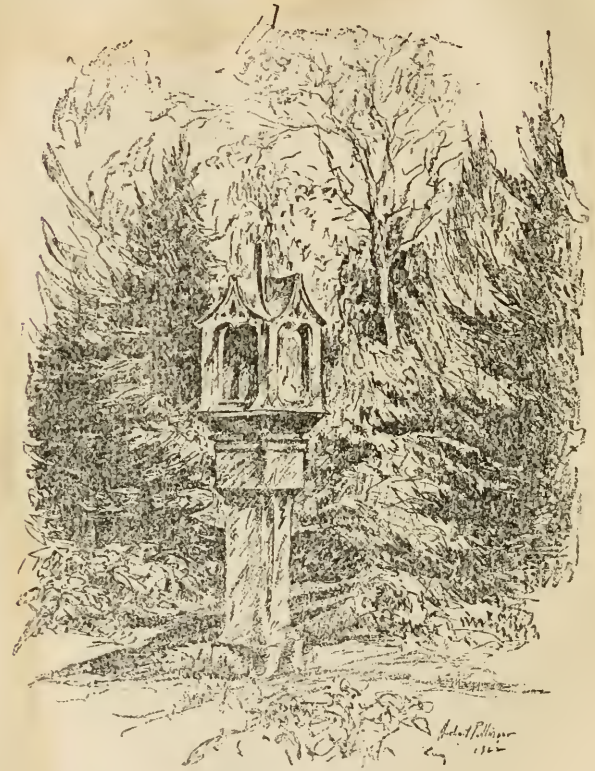
Roxborough Avenue, striking in from the southwest, crosses the Drive diagonally into **Kitchen's Lane**, which affords exit to Germantown by way of Carpenter Street. Over the bridge at this point the traveler by the main Drive may make an interesting side excursion. A walk of about 150 yards downstream, along the footpath, and a short scramble up hill will bring him to **Mom Rinker's Rock**, one of the highest and most picturesque crags in the region. In the legends connected with it Mom Rinker is variously described as a witch and a Revolutionary patriot. "Toleration Rock" would be a better title for this splendid spur, for here in 1883, the late John Welsh erected a heroic granite statue of William Penn, looking southward over the tree-tops toward his city. On the stone base is cut simply the word **Toleration.** The pale gray figure, seen from a distance in certain lights, seems poised in air. It stands close to the edge of the jutting ledge, from which to the creek winding through thick pines there is a sheer drop of two hundred feet. The view here is grand at all seasons; and from this peak, when the trees are bare, the **Monastery** may be seen on its hill to the northward beyond Kitchen's Lane. From the lane an indistinct path leads up over the hill to the venerable house, built about the middle of the Eighteenth Century, where, for some years, Joseph Gorgas and his Seventh Day Baptist brethren were cloistered from the world. Just below the bridge is a pool called the **Baptist-**

ration, or baptistery, in which proselytes were immersed.

At Kitchen's Lane the main Drive enters one of the loveliest and wildest stretches of the upper Wissahickon. A mile further on, where a small stream comes in from the westward through a charming valley, there are several **Caves**, natural and artificial, the largest a reminder of the useless and foolish labors of credulous gold miners of a century or more ago. Half a mile beyond, at Shawmont Avenue, are the dismantled piers of the old **Pipe Bridge**, built in 1870, over which for many years was carried the water supply from the Roxborough to the Mount Airy reservoir. Here begins a stretch of placid water. On the west bank there is a canoe landing, and in a little glen, hidden by the trees, is the old **Livezey House**, now the home of the **Valley Green Canoe Club.** Here one may catch, high up the wooded eastern slope, an occasional flash of riders on the bridle path. The hills begin to open, the road broadens and **Valley Green** appears—the heart of the upper Wissahickon.

The inn at Valley Green, three and three-quarter miles from the creek's mouth, and a mile from Germantown Avenue, is a rendezvous and delightful refreshment station for all. For many years past a committee of public-spirited women have had it in their care. Here ends navigation for canoes, and here in winter there is excellent skating. Just above the inn **Springfield Avenue** comes down from St. Martin's over an arched bridge which is a thing of beauty. Across this bridge, from Valley Green, on the road toward St. Martin's Station,

there is a beautiful and impressive **Wayside Shrine,** recently erected, as "a Memorial to the boys who gave their lives in the Great War." By this bridge,



Memorial Shrine

too—turning directly downstream along the foot-path, on the west bank—one may quickly reach the mouth of **Cresheim Creek,** not visible in the summer-time, from the main Drive. Just above the point

where the Cresheim joins the Wissahickon is the **Devil's Pool,** rich in Colonial and Revolutionary tradition, and a favorite haunt of artists. The volume of water here is, unfortunately, not so great as it once was, and some of the olden charm is lost.

Half a mile beyond Valley Green, at the base of a steep hill of massed rocks, covered with ferns and wild flowers is the **first drinking fountain** erected in Philadelphia. It bears date of 1854, and was the joint gift of **John Cook,** by whom it was erected, and Charles Megargee, owner of the land, whose famous paper mill, in a nearby meadow, was the last industrial establishment left standing along the Wissahickon. On a slab above the marble basin is cut the legend "Pro bono publico," and below "Esto perpetua" ("For the public good; let it remain forever")—a motto and devout aspiration that well applies to the whole Wissahickon region.

At the eastern end of **Rex Avenue Bridge** a mile above Valley Green, an arched gateway of stone admits to the rocky path leading up to the grandest of the Wissahickon's stony summits—**Indian Rock.** The spot is well named, and the noble work of art which now crowns it—the crouching figure of a gigantic Lenape warrior, from the chisel of Massey Rhind and erected in 1902 by Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Henry—is a fitting memorial to the native red men who were in the habit of meeting in council here until their disappearance from the valley about 1756. Beneath this granite lookout the hollow front of the cliff forms a natural amphitheatre in which the warriors must often have sat, facing a smaller outcropping of flat rock that may have

served as an altar or a rostrum for the chief. Below these rocky hills towering almost perpendicularly the stream enters a deep and narrow gorge. The whole neighborhood is inexpressibly wild and grand, maintaining, more closely than any other spot along the Wissahickon, the aspect and atmosphere of 200 years ago. For many years this air of ancient solitude was broken by the bustling activity of one of the most popular of the old road-houses, the **Indian Rock Hotel**, built and long conducted by Reuben Sands. The Park Commission removed the original tavern, and Sands erected another on Monastery Avenue, just beyond the park limits. But that, too, has passed.

Returning over Rex Avenue Bridge to the Drive, the traveler comes presently to Thomas Mill Road where the creek is spanned by the last of the old covered bridges once so numerous in the Wissahickon region. In 1738 there was a grist mill here, and the road was known as Barge's Mill Road until 1784 when Thomas bought the plant. In 1859 it was taken over by Charles Megargee who made a paper mill of it.

From this point north the country, though still rocky and uneven, becomes more level. In old days the mills were thick along the banks, and the numerous changes in ownership still cause some confusion in the names of the neighborhood's by-ways. Daniel Howell's grist mill, of 1710, passed to Jonathan Paul in 1738, to John and James Bell in 1801, and to Issachar Thorp in 1833. There are ancient inhabitants today who still speak of "Paul's

Mill Road" and (more frequently) "Bell's Mill Road" when they mean Thorp's Lane. This lane marked the northern limits of the Park when the Fairmount Park Commission took charge a half century ago, but the Drive has since been extended through the Andorra Nurseries to the County Line.

For the return trip down the Wissahickon to Valley Green all horsemen will be obliged—and the average walker will prefer—to keep to the main Drive. But for the hardy hiker there is a footpath, on the east side of the Wissahickon that will delightfully repay his extra efforts. At Valley Green the bridle path may be picked up again, and though there are many footpaths also beginning at Springfield Avenue, riders and walkers alike will find that splendid horse trail winding along the crest of the eastern ridge an avenue of rarest beauty.

Outlines of Wissahickon Geology

By Frederick Ehrenfeld, Ph.D.
In charge Geology and Mineralogy, University of Pennsylvania

Wissahickon Creek rises to the north of the city of Philadelphia in the general region of Gwynedd-Lansdale-North Wales, from where it flows as a small stream across Whitemarsh Valley to Chestnut Hill. It is at this portion of our local geography that those characteristics which have made the name of the Wissahickon famous really begin.

Chestnut Hill comprises a region of some 400 feet elevation above sea level at its highest, with the

most of the hills reaching about 300 feet; while at a distance down of from 100 to 200 feet lower flows the Wissahickon Creek, making the series of gorges, deep, narrow valleys and other natural aspects which have made this region justly famous as one of unusual beauty of landscape.

The explanation of this lies in the pronounced geological nature of the rocks of the region. To the north of Chestnut Hill the native rock formations are as a rule of a moderately soft and easily eroded character and the processes of erosion have reduced the country to a general flatness devoid of any pronounced changes of landscape character. Whereas on the south the rocks of the Chestnut Hill region are of an exceedingly durable nature and have resisted the wearing away of time to such an extent as to leave a series of rounded hills which are still projected above most of the other country. These Chestnut Hill rocks belong to what is known among geologists as "Appalachia"; that is, an extremely ancient land mass, presumably one of the foundation parts of the North American Continent, whose remnants are still to be seen in Pennsylvania, Maryland and adjacent states. This mass of land now comprises a series of very old and very much crystallized rock which is generally believed to represent, together with some formations about New England and Canada, the oldest recoverable rocks of North America. Its former area extended east beyond the present coast.

How long this portion of Pennsylvania has been a land surface exposed to the outer atmosphere is a question which is impossible of answer; certainly

when we would try to speak in the terms of human life it is not possible to express such a time in years. But the duration of time since the Wissahickon Creek began to carve its channel into the schists of the region has certainly been a long one even in the geological sense; it represents a time long enough to have seen the reduction of the softer limestone rocks of the White Marsh-Chester Valley area and the rounding off of the hills about Fort Washington and the other elevations of the general region, from a former and different landscape. In the life of our Wissahickon have been many changes of land level.

The inherent beauty of the valley of the Wissahickon is due not alone to its great age but to the nature of the underlying rock which has preserved the steep sides of the valley and presented a series of cliffs, walls and narrow deep gorges, which are a large part of the charm of the locality.

We owe the preservation of all this to a definite geological fact, the absence of glaciation. The rocks of New York City and vicinity which are so like our own in many ways were possibly at another geological day quite like our Chestnut Hill in landscape, but they were levelled down under the heavy drag of glaciation; their valleys, ravines and cliffs ground away.

The valley of the Wissahickon escaped all this since it lay too far to the south to come within the reach of the glaciation. It presents to us today a unique relic of geological ages otherwise long since passed away.

Trees and Wild Flowers

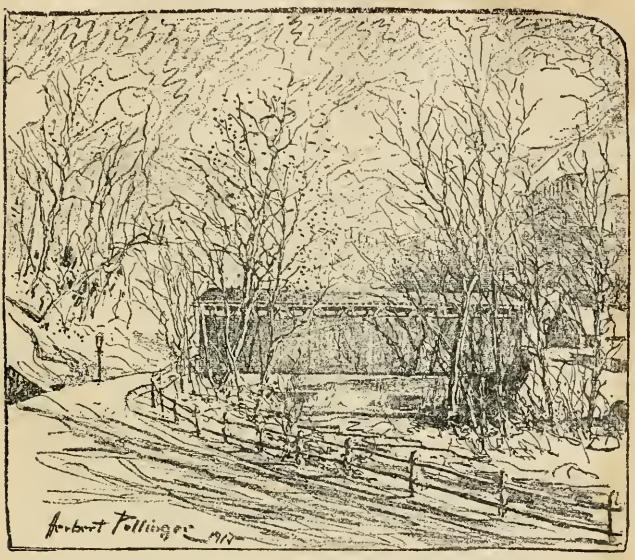
By Alexander MacElwee
President Philadelphia Botanical Club

The charm of the Wissahickon lies in a combination of conditions, any one of which might be excelled in localities not far away; but after all is said, we must admit, that without the arboreal vegetation the lovely region would lack its prime factor. A complete study of all the species of plants would require more space than is permitted here. A running comment on the chief elements of the plant life will suffice.

We have in this limited area a fair representation of the vegetation of the Transition Zone of the Eastern United States, with its quick changes from extreme heat to extreme cold. The Hemlock is easily the most beautiful tree in the region. This graceful evergreen tree is quite at home in the valley and may be seen at every turn of the drive. On steep, almost soilless, slopes, hundreds of tiny seedlings may be counted, proving that it is surely upon its "native heath." At Valley Green the Hemlocks assume the character of almost pure forest, forming so dense a canopy as to shut off all light and preventing growth of any plants on the floor of the forest below.

At the end of Springfield Avenue Bridge, may be noted fine specimens of Norway Spruce and Scotch Pine, both of them introduced trees. White Pines are frequent. In recent years thousands of seedling pines have been planted with a view to reforesting naked slopes. These consist principally of the White Pine, Red Pine, Jack Pine and short leaf Yellow Pine.

Quite a variety of grasses, sedges, rushes and allied plants interest the discerning botanist. In the woods the Yellow Adder's-Tongue, the Grape Hyacinth, Solomon's Seal, Indian Cucumber Root and allied plants of



Old Covered Bridge

the Lily Family, may be found in the season. Native Orchids, formerly abundant in the rich woods, like the Indian, have long since disappeared.

The Crack Willow, a native of Europe, has made itself at home all along the creek and its tributaries. Especially fine trees occur in the meadow between the Lincoln Drive and Rittenhouse Street. The White or Silver Leaf Poplar, another immigrant from Europe, forms thickets along some of the lanes and sites of old

houses. The native large-toothed Aspen is common in the dryer woods. The Black Walnut is a frequent tree. Its near relative, the Butternut, is common, particularly along the banks of the upper stream; its whitish trunks standing out conspicuously.

There are several varieties of Hickories and Birches, and the American Beech is common, in some places forming pure growths. The Chestnut tree is apparently a thing of the past and we never expect to see again the glorious bloom of this magnificent tree in July. There are several species of Oak growing in the Wissahickon forest. The White and Red Oak are freely distributed. Pin Oak may be seen in the meadows skirting the stream. Higher up on rocky slopes, where there is but little soil, may be found the Rock Chestnut Oak, noted for its deeply furrowed bark on old trees. Unfortunately this tree is falling a prey to the Golden Oak scale, another importation from Europe. The Bear or Shrub Oak may be found near the statue of "Toleration" at the "Mom Rinker's Rock."

The American Elm is a beautiful tree common in the valleys. A magnificent specimen of the European Elm, considerably over a hundred years old, grows near the site of the Dewee's Mill at Germantown Avenue and the creek. It is surrounded by a goodly array of young plants, all arising from the parent and forming a small sized forest of its own. Due north of the Dewee's Elm is a fine old Silver Maple, standing in what was formerly the Convent Garden. The Negundo Maple is a very common tree all along the stream, and so are several species of Mulberry and the Hackberry.

The Tulip Poplar is one of the commonest trees and probably there are more grand individuals of

this species than any other. The straight trunks rising clean and columnar—virtual pillars in God's Temple—bear aloft a mass of clean shining leaves, seldom attacked by insects or fungus. The flowers are beautiful and are succeeded by cones of winged seeds which, let loose by the first frosts of winter, are driven by the wind to great distances and come tail-spinning to the ground everywhere.

The Laurel Family is represented by two species of woody plant—the Spice Bush and the Sassafras—both of them characterised, as are nearly all the plants of this family, by spicy, aromatic taste or smell. The Spice Bush is very common on bottom-lands especially, its red seeds forming an acceptable food for the birds. The Sassafras, a beautiful small flat-topped tree, affects the dryer areas and may be seen skirting every clump of woodlands or developing into beautiful rounded specimens in the fence corners or open fields.

The Plane Tree, Buttonball, or Buttonwood (and occasionally called Sycamore), is a native, noted for its bark peeling off at the end of summer. There are fine specimens of this beautiful tree at the edge of the water in a grand sweep of the stream just above Rex Avenue; the white stems stand out silhouetted against the darker background of Hemlock and Oak forest. Related to the Plane are the Wild Hydrangea and the Witch Hazel, both woodland shrubs, the latter noted for its streamers of golden flowers seen nearly everywhere in our area gleaming in the sunlight of the Indian Summer.

Volumes might be written of the Sumac, the Wild Cherry, Hawthorn and other small trees, but space

forbids. The Dogwood family is represented by several species, mostly shrubs. The Dogwood is one of the most beautiful of our native small trees. Flowers,

"Pro Bono Publico"

leaves and fruit have each their peculiar charm. Wild Azaleas lend color to the woods in late spring, while all the year we have the fresh green leaves of the Kalmia or Mountain Laurel. If the palm be given to

the Hemlock as the most beautiful evergreen tree, it may also be awarded to the Kalmia as our most beautiful evergreen shrub. Whether on a bleak hillside or wet swamp, in sun or shade, the American Laurel is ever beautiful; fresh green always in winter and summer, and when in full bloom at the latter end of May, it is an object of beauty seldom equaled and never excelled.

The American or White Ash is a common tree and thanks to its winged seed, one may see, along with Tulip Poplars, thousands of lusty seedling youngsters on every hand.

The Catalpa tree is making itself at home wherever an opportunity presents. Along with it and resembling it in leaf character is the Paulownia, a Japanese tree. This beautiful tree bears, early in spring, panicles of steel blue flowers so numerous as to give color to the woods on the west side of the creek below Hermit Lane.

Like the Indian our native trees seem to recede before the march of the White Man. They resent the opening up of the woods, the tramping of the soil and succumb readily to attacks of insects and disease. The Chestnut has gone; others are quickly following. We know not when some fell pest will attack our beautiful Tulip Poplars, Ash and other trees. It seems as if fate had decreed their destruction and that to alien species, their places had been assigned. To the Ailanthes, Paulownia, Catalpa and others to follow, the gaps in our woods have been given.

Mosses Along the Wissahickon

By George B. Kaiser

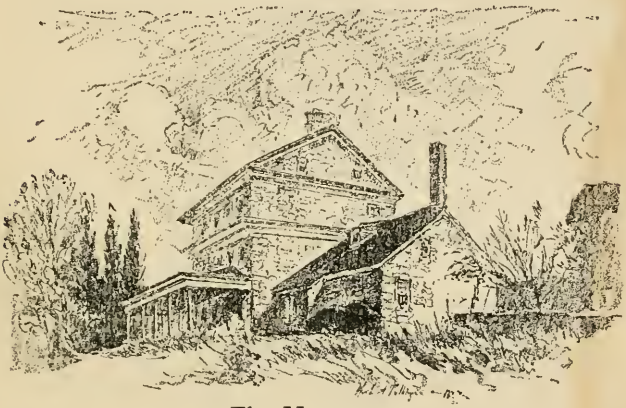
To the student of the lower plants which include the ferns, mosses, lichens, fungi and slime moulds, the valley of Wissahickon Creek is a veritable Mecca.

At all seasons an abundance of lovely ferns grace the driveway. Even in the dead of winter the Christmas fern decks the banks with green and in several places the "cheerful community of the polypody" is to be seen in verdant beauty despite the blasts. The club moss of the north, too—really not a moss but a species of Lycopodium—adds an evergreen adornment to the scene.

In summer, however, the ferns are at their best. The Dicksonia, the hay-scented or boulder fern, that favorite of Thoreau, is perhaps the commonest of all, but the Lady Fern, as well, and the Spinulose and Marginal Shield Ferns, the fragile Bladder Fern, the Brake or Bracken—more rarely the Beech Fern—and other species, aid in making the region an instructive collecting ground for the pteridologists.

Then the mosses! How they abound upon those banks along the drive. And there are rarities among them, too. The Buxbaumia grows above Valley Green and for years a group of students has carefully noted a colony at the base of a certain buttonwood. This moss is a curious dwarf, which a famous botanist has likened to a "hump-backed elf" while a more prosaic enthusiast has called it a

"bug on a stick." The fruits look like glossy brown buds borne half inch high on slender stalks and when they mature these capsules explode, forcibly discharging the spores. Buxbaumia has a near relative also to be found along the Wissahickon. It is called Webera sessilis and the fertile plants look very much like grains of wheat sparsely scattered on the bank.



The Monastery

On the rocks in one place grows Rhabdoweisia, a moss otherwise usually found in Alpine regions, and several of those mosses whose tiny capsules present strangely twisted teeth about their mouth may be discovered if we search diligently.

Some of us remember how faithfully we always revisited in April the old stone bridge at Valley Green, where grew a Grimmia with fruits showing outspread red teeth just like very tiny starfish when they opened at that season. How we regretted

when that old stone wall of the bridge was replaced by a new one. The uninitiated do not realize the beauty and interest that these mosses offer to the student. The delicate feathery forms, the cushions, the mats of so many kinds, their aesthetic value in the landscape, their wonderful arrangement of cells under the microscope, their ever varying fruits so infinitely well adapted in structure for the sowing of the spores—you must look at them closely to see all these beauties, but even the general effect is gratifying and it is difficult to imagine how bare those banks would appear without their mossy covering. Read Ruskin! In his "Modern Painters" there is a bit of poetic prose about the mosses.

We must not forget the lichens. These grey-green plants, composed of an alga and a fungus living together, also occur along the Wissahickon Creek, and their life histories present strange facts of symbiosis or of parasitism, which have been the foundation for various theories during the past half century or more. The questions are not settled yet, so if you want to participate in weighty argument just study the lichens and qualify to give your own opinion of their true nature.

If you have sought the Wissahickon in late summer, surely you have been impressed with the many kinds of mushrooms and toadstools to be found there. Their colors are many, their forms are many, too, and you have vaguely thought of those good to eat as mushrooms, and of all the others as toadstools, but if you had entered the true realm of mycology you would have found that all these fungi are strangely fascinating. Some are so deadly

that for their poison there is no known antidote, others offer a grateful food for man and without pretending at all to be a great mycophagist—an eater of fungi—the writer has enjoyed at least twenty kinds collected in the Wissahickon region.

More lowly than the true fungi, but like them living on decaying organic remains, are the Slime Moulds—the Myxomycetes, as they are scientifically called. The naked eye does not see the most interesting part of their life history, which is spent as naked protoplasm creeping wonderfully through the interstices of decaying logs and leaves. During this time they seem to be animal and by some are still called mycetozoa, or slime animals, but at a certain season the protoplasmic substance creeps out from the log on leaves and fructifies. Many tiny spore-cases appear which have delicate structure and bear many, often bright, colors. We have several good students of the Slime Moulds who search the vicinity of the drive each year for new and interesting forms of these plants. Many species are to be found all through the Valley and, if you have doubts, just take a walk out there some fine day in August with a "myxomycetologist" and he will show you the infinitely small in beauty of which you may have never dreamed.

So rich is this Valley of the Upper Wissahickon in all these forms of lower plant life that here is presented, for scientific research and constant enlightening study, a field which can never be replaced, a field so valuable to the student that to our knowledge it has not its like near any great city of the world.

Birds of the Wissahickon

By Wm. Henry Trotter

The charm of the beautiful Wissahickon is much enhanced by the song and color of many birds. In this little bit of native wilderness, bordering a great city, many rare species find a sanctuary, make a home, and if undisturbed will return every spring to gladden the hearts of the steadily increasing fellowship of those who seek peace and recreation in the study of nature's miracles.

Although there is no season of the year when some birds may not be found there, spring and early summer mark the flood tide of number and variety. As nesting time approaches and courtship is in full sway, the happy suitor dons his finest feathers and sings his little heart out in ecstasy. During May, in the height of the migration period, the woods, on certain days, seem full of birds, resting on their flight farther north. Most of these birds are Warblers, small, active, of infinite variety and generally of brilliant plumage. The Wissahickon offers an ideal refuge and rare members of this large sylvan family may often be seen by the fortunate. By June most of the travelers have departed and one can now get in close touch with the home life of feathered favorites who year after year unerringly return to their birthplace.

In some break in the woods where the undergrowth is thick, a deliberate mellow whistle attracts our attention and our eyes will soon locate on a commanding bough a bright spot of red, a male Cardinal in all his glory. These brilliantly

colored finches, a gift from the South, are now common all through the Wissahickon Valley. A more spectacular vocal performer, but more soberly colored, is the Brown Thrasher, called by Audubon the Ferruginous Mockingbird and fairly equalling

Rex Avenue Bridge

that marvelous vocalist. From a lofty perch he pours forth a medley of song, hardly stopping to take breath.

Before moving on we must find the Indigo-bird, a small finch of a much darker blue than the Bluebird and very common in all the open places. His song, however, is not equal to his looks. Two warblers, the Maryland Yellow-throat, and the Blue-winged Warbler, should also be here. The male Yellow-throat wears a jet black mask and is thus easily

identified. Both nest on the ground. If a thick patch of bramble is near at hand we should find the Yellow-breasted Chat, the largest member of the Warbler family. Although his appearance is striking, with his bright yellow breast, his main claim to fame is the peculiarity of his song, which is a series of trills and calls of infinite range and variety. He has been described as a vocal gymnast. When the moon is full he often sings all night long.

It is probable that a loud ringing call has by this time reached our ears, but it will not be easy to find the owner. It sounds like "whee-udel, whee-udel, whee-udel," and comes from the Carolina Wren, a larger cousin of the well-known House Wren; it is also a gift from the South, where it is very common. The power of the song compared to his size puts all the other birds to the blush. This Wren and the Cardinal are with us all the year 'round. As we pass from the sunlight to the shade of the tall hemlocks, other bird music catches our attention; the arresting song of the Ovenbird, a small, ground-walking warbler, marked like a miniature Thrush. The woods resound with his shrill "Teacher, Teacher, Teacher," as John Burroughs has so well described it, increasing in speed and height of scale as he finishes his measure. The Ovenbird is named from the appearance of his nest, which is on the ground and roofed over like an oven.

Three other warblers spend the summer here, the Kentucky Warbler, the Worm-eating Warbler, and the Louisiana Water Thrush. The Water Thrush is a lover of mountain streams where trout lurk in

the shadows and is not found here, except in the Wissahickon and along the small creeks that tumble down the wooded slopes. His wild song, when first heard on his arrival in early spring, never fails to thrill the bird lover.

A walk in these woods would be incomplete unless it was our good fortune to see the Scarlet Tanager, the most brilliant gem of our feathered visitors and a songster of no mean merit; his throaty call of "Chip-Churr" lets us know when he is about. We must not forget the Red-eyed Vireo, singing continuously in a low, pleasing monotone. His pensile nest is one of the finest examples of bird architecture. He is a sober-colored little bird, of a trusting nature, and will allow a close approach while industriously hunting through the leafy boughs for his favorite diet of measuring worms and small caterpillars. His cousin, the Yellow-throated Vireo, is not uncommon, but lives mainly in the tree tops. As we approach the stream, we will probably be startled by a sound like a watchman's rattle, as a Kingfisher flies by. Each pair have always their recognized fishing section and favorite perches, where they keep a sharp lookout for any careless fish that come too close to the surface. Here we will see the Spotted Sandpiper or Tilt-up, the name he gets from the teetering character of his walk.

The Swallow that skims the surface of the water is called the Rough Wing and nests between the stones in the old bridges. Another bird nests under the old bridges or in a cave if one is handy—the Phoebe Flycatcher. His song is no more than an effort to call his own name, but is one of the Wissa-

hickon's most familiar sounds. Two other Flycatchers help the Phoebe to keep down the insect hosts, the Acadian Flycatcher and the Wood Pewee; and sometimes the Crested Flycatcher pays a visit to the more open places. The Wood Pewee also calls his own name in a clear, plaintive whistle.

Of the Woodpecker family, the Flicker and Downy Woodpecker are both common and the Hairy Woodpecker is sometimes seen. The Nuthatch family is represented by the White-breasted, whose call of "Yank, Yank" is often heard. He is a short, stumpy little bird and runs up and down the tree trunks hunting the bark for grubs. His cousin, the Tufted Titmouse, a straggler from the South, sometimes pays a visit; his song is loud and monotonous "peto, peto, peto, peto," or rarely "dear, dear me," which is more pleasing. Bluejays find a retreat here, but notwithstanding their size and bright blue plumage, are more often heard than seen.

Of the larger birds, Crows are plentiful, nest in the tall hemlocks and attack with raucous cry any Owl or large Hawk that ventures into their preserves. The swift Cooper's Hawk, however, does not fear them and nests in a suitable crotch in the high oaks. The Sparrow Hawk also is at home on the edge of the woodland and the little Screech Owl hides by day in the hollow trees. As evening falls and we leave this woodland paradise, the full splendor of America's finest songster, the Wood Thrush, filters through the leafy aisles and is a fitting close to a day with nature at her best "far from the madding crowd."

Railroad and Trolley Routes

Pennsylvania Railroad—Chelten Avenue Station (Germantown) is five blocks from Rittenhouse Street entrance; Tulpehocken Station is four blocks from Walnut Lane bridge; Carpenter Station and Allen's Lane Station each about 3 miles, and St. Martin's Station, 1 mile from creek at Valley Green; Chestnut Hill Station is 1¼ miles from upper entrance at County Line. (Trolley Route 23 passes station).

Reading Railroad—Wissahickon Station (Roxborough) is four blocks from Ridge Avenue entrance.

Trolley Lines—Route 61 reaches the Ridge Avenue entrance; Route 52, the foot of Rittenhouse Street; Route 53 parallels the Creek from Rittenhouse Street to Carpenter Street at distances varying from one-quarter to one-half mile away; and Route 23 parallels the Creek north from Carpenter Street to the County Line which it crosses within two blocks of the upper entrance. It crosses Allen's Lane, Springfield Avenue, Hartwell Avenue and Rex Avenue about 1¼ miles from the Creek; at Thomas Mill Road (Chestnut Avenue) and at Bell's Mill Road (Thorp's Lane) the distance is but three-quarters of a mile. Valley Green can be reached by two walks from Allen's Lane, one by way of the continuation of Cresheim Road, the other by way of Livezey Lane at the west end of Allen's Lane.

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C034861497

14 DAY US
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHI
LANDSCAPE ARCHI

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

NOV 5 1956

MAR 24 1981

General Library
University of California
Berkeley